

**PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
MINUTES
GENERAL MEETING
November 28, 2005**

Place: Room 206
Town Hall

TIME: 8:00 PM

PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION MEMBERS ATTENDING:
Damanti, Conze, Forman, Kenny, Spain

STAFF ATTENDING: Ginsberg, Keating

At 8:00 P.M., Chairman Damanti read the Special Meeting agenda item:

GENERAL MEETING

Discussion regarding Special Permit Applications #221-A through #221-E, Aquarion Water Company, property owner, for property at 4 Tower Drive.

Commission review and discussion of issues related to the recent installations of telecommunications antennas and modifications made to the Aquarion Water Company water tower at 4 Tower Drive. Telecommunications companies on the tower include AT&T, Verizon Wireless, Nextel Communications, and Sprint Spectrum.

Chairman Damanti explained that recently a panel fell from the existing water tower on Tower Drive. Fortunately, nobody was hurt, but the Planning and Zoning Commission did receive a letter/e-mail from a neighboring property owner who had concerns about this incident. He noted that Aquarion Water Company owns the Tower and is primarily responsible for its upkeep. The conduct of the tenants is the responsibility of both the tenants and the property owner.

Mr. Mark Fois of Aquarion Water Company said that better controls have been put in place as a result of this incident. When Aquarion Water Company was informed that the panel had fallen down, they shut down the job and hired a private, independent third party engineer to inspect the tower. Mr. Fois said that Aquarion had not been informed of the fallen panel until two weeks after it happened. They recently received a report from R.L. Merrill Engineers of Massachusetts who confirmed that the Tower was safe and it was safe to continue working. Aquarion Water Company then authorized work on the panels to continue and to secure the panels. All of the other panels were removed as a precautionary measure. Mr. Jason D'Amico of Nextel said that the panel was removed from the neighbor's yard by someone from Nextel, and now it is inside the locked compound around the water tower.

Mr. Carlo Centore said that he was very concerned when someone from Nextel contacted him and told him that a panel had fallen off the tower. He had reviewed the shop drawings of the installation for both Sprint Spectrum and AT&T, and he climbed the Tower by a bucket lift and inspected the outside of the Tower. He noted that the AT&T and Sprint Spectrum panels were properly installed and are all intact and that he has no concern about them falling down.

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Mr. Fois explained that the water tower is a unique steel tank which holds water. Aquarion Water Company receives a detailed inspection report every five years. That steel tank is surrounded by a concrete tower. He explained that the panels which were installed on the concrete tower were installed for Nextel, and they were installed incorrectly. They were glued using a type of adhesive, instead of using mechanical fasteners. Mr. Centore confirmed that the contractor used adhesive instead of a fastener. He explained that the Verizon Wireless panels are being properly installed.

Mr. Conze noted that situations occur, but it is the responsibility to get it fixed properly. He would like a detailed letter about what happened, any corrective actions that have been or will be taken, and future inspection processes. He said that he has a concern if Aquarion Water Company wants to continue to use this water tower to continue generating revenue in this manner. Mr. Fois confirmed that Aquarion Water Company has taken actions and will assure that corrective actions have been taken. He noted that a final inspection had not been requested or made of Nextel's work.

Ms. Forman said that she was horrified to hear that it was not properly installed and that it was unsafely installed. She said that there needs to be better communications all around. Mr. Centore said that as soon as the panel fell off, the other panels being installed were removed and detailed inspections made. Mr. Fois said that there is a plan to better involve the neighbors in the future and things are much better now with the neighbors than several years ago. He said that Aquarion Water Company is committed to getting things corrected and made right.

Mr. Kenny asked the water company and telecommunications company representatives to: 1) evaluate the potential of a secondary safety strap; 2) install an electronic warning signal if something is loose; 3) have another engineer evaluate the impact of the new, heavy cap on top of the old tower and 4) improve the existing communication system amongst the Water Company and the carriers and the Town. Mr. Fois said that Aquarion Water Company will look into those measures. Mr. Centore then updated the Commission on the status of the telecommunication companies. He noted that AT&T and Sprint Spectrum have been long active and Nextel and Verizon Wireless are in process. He expects that in another two to three weeks Verizon Wireless should be up and running on the site. Mr. D'Amico confirmed that for Nextel it will take three to four weeks for final completion.

Mr. Pat LaVecchia of 444 Mansfield Avenue then spoke. He said that it seems like the neighbors have to police to work in progress. He said that the panel originally fell on a Sunday and it fell about 250 feet into private property. That panel was then removed by someone without any further information provided, and that was one of his major concerns.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremy B. Ginsberg
Planning & Zoning Director